

Albert Gallatin Jenkins: 2

Father Found His Plantation Paradise Along Ohio and Named It Greenbottom

REMARKS: This is the second in a series of articles on the life of the late Congressman Albert Gallatin Jenkins. Readers are invited to supply additional material for eventual inclusion in a biographical volume on General Jenkins which Congressman Hocher is writing.

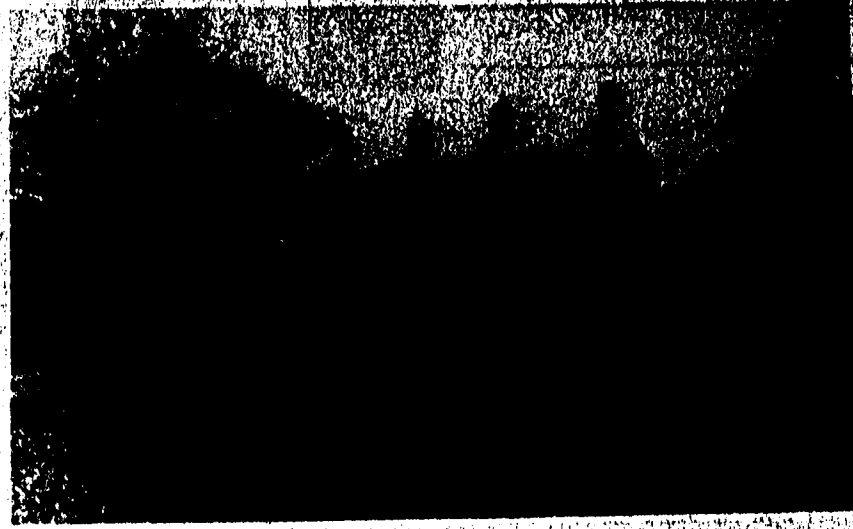
Picture, if you will, a strange and varied quartet, riding with all their provisions up and across the rugged Allegheny Mountains, bound for Cabell County and the Ohio River. There was 48-year-old Captain William Jenkins, a wealthy seafarer, and his 21-year-old bride of less than a year. Then there was Captain Jenkins' sister, with the improbable name of Eustasia, and the three-week-old daughter, who also carried the name Eustasia.

Why did they choose Cabell County? Captain Jenkins, an enterprising and adventurous soul, was always looking for new worlds to conquer. Land was cheap in 1825 along the Ohio River — less than \$4 an acre. It was comparatively wild country, but it was good bottom land along the river and Captain Jenkins loved the river. The captain was at the stage of life when he wanted to settle down on a huge plantation and raise his family.

The year that Captain William Jenkins and his wife, sister and little infant daughter journeyed across the Alleghenies, 1825, was the same year that John Quincy Adams became President of the United States, that Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was graduated from Bowdoin College, Alfred Lord Tennyson in 1825 was still a student at Cambridge, England, while Sir Walter Scott and William Wordsworth were in their prime. The immortal Ralph Waldo Emerson had just started to write. In 1825, the master railroad magnate and founder of Huntington, Collis P. Huntington, was only four years of age. Three great generals were born in 1825; they were named A. P. Hill, John H. Morgan and George E. Pickett.

Bought 4,441 Acres

When the Jenkins entourage arrived at their Ohio River destination at the end of September, 1825, Captain Jenkins purchased 4,441 acres of land for \$15,000. This vast tract, stretching for eight miles along the Ohio River, Captain Jenkins aptly termed "Greenbottom." The leaves had not quite turned in the fall, and the grassy bottom lands shone verdantly in the morning dew; Captain Jen-



STATELY JENKINS MANSION STILL STANDING AT GREENBOTTOM

kins had found his emerald paradise, the plantation where he wanted to settle down and live.

The Greenbottom plantation constituted very rich farming land, and it is still an excellent crop producer. The Jenkins tract is north of what is known as the "Savage Grant" — the 28,000-plus acres which Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia granted to John Savage and 60 others for fighting in the French and Indian War.

It is also likely that the Jenkins tract was first awarded, or "patented" as the term was then used, for similar service in the French and Indian War. An abstract of title, now in possession of Mr. and Mrs. William Gustin, who own a few acres at the southern end of the tract, states that the land was originally patented by the Commonwealth of Virginia to the Fry family; deeded by Joshua Fry to Peyton Short on July 9, 1805; then deeded to W. C. Nicholas on September 20, 1811 for \$8,800.00 in cash. W. C. Nicholas was Governor of Virginia from 1814 to 1816.

Still another governor of Virginia, William H. Cabell (after whom Cabell County was named) figured in the ownership of the land when he endorsed several notes for the benefit of W. C. Nicholas. The generous-hearted Governor Cabell signed his name in trust to the tune of some \$23,000, giving rise to the notation in the title that on July 29, 1819 a "trust deed" was made out from W. C. Nicholas to William Wert and

Robert Gamble. For a nominal consideration of \$1, Mr. Nicholas, it was stated, "hath granted, bargained, sold and by these presence does grant, bargain and sell—all that tract or parcel of land lying and being in the County of Cabell on the Ohio River, commonly called the Greenbottom, containing about 4,441 acres — In trust to secure and save harmless William H. Cabell who became endorser of several notes for the benefit of Wilson C. Nicholas."

Built Temporary Home

Then Governor Cabell purchased the Greenbottom property for \$13,000 from the trustees. On March 1, 1821 Governor Cabell and his wife, Agnes, conveyed Greenbottom to John Coalter and John H. Cocke in order "to settle several debts," and Captain William Jenkins made his tidy \$15,000 purchase directly from Coalter and Cocke.

As soon as he settled down and unpacked, Captain Jenkins began building a temporary house which he quickly completed as shelter for the coming fall and winter. Here in the temporary home his three sons were born to join their sister Eustasia. From the names of two of the sons, there is little doubt where Captain Jenkins' political sympathies inclined. He named his first son Thomas Jefferson Jenkins (born November 22, 1826). Some might have concluded that when William Alexander Jenkins (born November 21, 1828) was named, his middle name may have been

derived from the first Secretary of the Treasury. All doubts were resolved as to Captain Jenkins' preference, however, when he named his third son, after Thomas Jefferson's secretary of the treasury, Albert Gallatin Jenkins.

Albert Gallatin Jenkins was born at the Greenbottom plantation on November 10, 1830. Perhaps the biggest event in Albert's early life was the realization of what had long been a dream of his father: the construction of a "Homestead" overlooking the Ohio River. The "dream house," which was finished when young Albert was five years old, is still standing today, in its fundamental structure the same as it was over a century and a quarter ago.

18 Miles North

Some day when the weather is clear, drive up the Ohio River road along Route 2 toward Point Pleasant. On the river side of the road, about 18 miles north-east of Huntington and two miles south of the Mason County line, you will see this stately old mansion just across the Baltimore & Ohio railroad tracks.

The late Max Blederman, Huntington automobile dealer whose Ohio River Road home was close by, owned the property which is now owned by his son, Louis Blederman. The old Jenkins home is occupied by tenants, Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Trippett, who gladly show to visitors this old and historic mansion where Albert Gallatin Jenkins spent his happy boyhood days.

(To be continued)